

Ganges Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes for June 24, 2025
Ganges Township Hall
119th Avenue and 64th Street
Fennville MI, Allegan County

I. Call to Order - Roll Call

Vice Chair: Dale **Pierson** called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call: Chair: Jackie **DeZwaan** - Absent

Vice Chair: Dale **Pierson** - Present

Secretary: Phil **Badra** - Present

Commissioner: Edward **Gregory** - Present

Commission Trustee: Dick **Hutchins** - Present

Zoning Administrator: Tasha **Smalley** - Present

Recording Secretary: Katie **Wolfe** - Present

II. Additions to the Agenda and adoption

Badra recommended that the PC review the Lakeshore Overlay District in new business.

Pierson recommended that the PC review the May 28th meeting minutes to determine a list of items needed for the Saugatuck Meadows application in new business.

Badra made a motion to amend the agenda with the previous additions. **Gregory** seconded the motion. Motion passed.

III. General Public Comment

Aaron **Kronemeyer** - 6556 118th Ave. wondered if the events at Campit have been approved through the Township Board.

Kate **Ensfield** - 1967 Lakeshore Dr. commented that something needs to start with restrictions on Short Term Rentals in Ganges Township.

Chuck **Mannion** - 6611 Deer Trail noted the number of attendees at the previous meeting, stating that all were against the proposed campground. He also stated that people with money are coming into the township and doing whatever they want.

Linda **Rodriguez** - 1665 65th St. questioned if a Short Term Rental is considered commercial and wondered how they can be on a residential lot.

Diane **Ayari** - 1708 65th St. shared her opposition of the proposed campground and is concerned about the water table.

Kim **Mannion** - 6611 Deer Trail shared her opposition of the proposed campground.

Stephanie **Hughes** and Sue **Mackey** - 6645 Foote Trail shared their opposition of the proposed campground.

Ernie **Kessler** - 2173 66th St. questioned what it is going to take to stop the proposed campground.

Kevin **Perkins** - 1741 65th St. wondered what the residents can do at this point to stop the proposed campground.

IV. Correspondence and Upcoming Seminars

Letters to the PC regarding and opposed to the Saugatuck Meadows campground application:

G., J. & Jacob **Soloman**, G. **Gerstner**, M. & J. **Lavery**, A. & M. **Maslanka**, R. & J. **Firmiss**, A. **Blore**, M. & T. **Spouse**, D. & E. **Rolf**, R. & S. **Kavanaugh**, L., S., K. & R. **Mulderink**

Phelps to **DeZwaan** RE: FOIA request from Varnum

Pierson to **PC** RE: Blueberry Lane

Badra to **PC** RE: Venue change for July meeting

Badra, 2 emails to **PC** RE: The lake bluff

DeZwaan to **PC** RE: Budget request

Phelps to **PC** RE: FOIA request from O'Connor

Smalley to **PC** from Varnum RE: Saugatuck Meadows application

V. Public Hearing – None

VI. Approval of Prior Minutes

Motion made by **Badra**, seconded by **Hutchins** to approve the May 28, 2025, Regular Monthly Meeting minutes, with corrections. Motion passed.

VII. Old Business

The PC members signed off on the Final Site Plan for Private Road Blueberry Lane.

VIII. New Business

a. Review the May 28th meeting minutes to determine a list of items needed for the Saugatuck Meadows application.

The following are items requested to be submitted:

1. Correct the LARA misspelling of the name or amend the application to reflect the spelling per LARA.
2. Correct the typos on the plan.
3. A statement from Allegan County Environmental Health Department that the well and septic systems are adequate to handle the 89 RV sites (which according to EGLE can have 8 people in a motorhome).
4. A statement from the drain commissioner that the storm water management system is adequate and the detention areas have some sort of an outlet, not just evaporation.
5. A traffic study at 66th St and 118th Ave, a traffic impact assessment or traffic impact study pursuant to the institute of transportation engineer standards.
6. A wetlands study.
7. A statement (notarized) that the campground is not an extension of Campit.
8. Re-calculate the lot coverage.
9. Add stop sign(s) and flow of traffic sign(s) to the plan.

Smalley noted that if this information is not received in time, then the Saugatuck Meadows campground will not be on the agenda for the July meeting.

b. Lakeside Overlay District

Badra shared that a resident along the lakeshore brought in an excavator by barge and took a swath 8 ft wide, 15 ft deep from the top of the bluff to the water and he

THE RESIDENT has called it a private road, a driveway, and a boat ramp. **Badra** continued that a private road does not go to the beach, the County Road Commission has not given them a permit for a driveway, and boat ramps are not allowed in the township. OSHA and Army Corps were involved and EGLE says they have no jurisdiction because it is not a critical dune. **Smalley** shared the High Risk Erosion Map and noted that there are two little sections on the map that are not regulated and this particular person is in one of the two sections. **Badra** said EGLE only regulates an area if it is considered a critical dune. He added that this same thing happened in Saugatuck Township and after that, they passed an ordinance to protect the bluff and the lakeshore.

Pierson recommended that the PC go through the Saugatuck Township Lakeside Overlay District, talk about what is in there and decide if the PC would be in favor of using that particular information. **Gregory** wondered if some form of action should be taken against this resident, or if the PC is looking at a creation of an ordinance for the Ganges Township Overlay district. **Badra** replied both, enforcement for this particular incident and the creation of a new ~~ordinance~~ OVERLAY DISTRICT.

Gregory agrees with the idea of an overlay district for Ganges Township that is carefully created while following along with Saugatuck Township's Ordinance. **Gregory** continued that he is confused by EGLE because there is so much uncertainty of who does what. He said, before proceeding, he would want a meeting with EGLE to define exactly what they do in Ganges Township and what they regulate. He added, then he could proceed to create an overlay district. **Gregory** wondered about any enforcement on this resident. **Hutchins** responded that they are not violating any Township ordinances.

Pierson stated according to Michigan Compiled Laws 324.32311 an existing zoning ordinance or a modification/amendment to a zoning ordinance that regulates a high-risk area, a flood risk area, or an environmental area shall be submitted to the department (EGLE) for approval or disapproval. So, if the PC decides to go ahead with the overlay district, it would have to be approved through EGLE.

Pierson continued that according to Shoreland Management Part 323 Administrative Rules R 281.22 High-risk erosion areas, the setbacks established by the department shall not be construed as limiting local units of government from establishing larger setbacks.

Gregory stated that it seems like the PC needs a committee work session on this because the PC can't come up with an ordinance tonight.

Badra suggested that the PC review the SAUGATUCK TOWNSHIP Overlay District information and send out comments of pros and cons as an email to each other; ~~then the PC~~ BUT CAN ONLY BE discussed at the next available meeting.

IX. Administrative Updates

a. Township Board

Hutchins reported that the Township Board adopted a moratorium on campgrounds for the next year. **Smalley** noted that the moratorium cannot affect the application that was already submitted.

b. Zoning Board of Appeals

Pierson had nothing to report.

c. Zoning Administrator

Smalley reported that she should have a Site Plan Application for a new build on Blue Star and 116th Ave. This would happen at the July or August meeting, depending on when the campground is discussed again. **Smalley** also got a call that someone bought the old Valentine Excavating on 118th Ave. and they want to do some type of storage.

X. Future Meeting Dates - July 23rd & August 26th

XI. General Public Comments -

Aaron **Kronemeyer** noted that Campit is already advertising an expansion. **Smalley** replied that Campit purchased more land and they do plan to expand, however, the proposed campground is separate.

Kevin **Perkins** asked if the moratorium would affect the Campit expansion. **Smalley** responded that it would.

Kim **Mannion** read from a source online that stated, if a public hearing has taken place on a proposed zoning ordinance or zoning amendment but no final decision has been made it can be included in a moratorium. **Mannion** asked if that information was true for the campground's Special Land Use application. **Smalley** responded that they are two different things.

Charles **Mannion** noted that the lakeshore incident discussed appears to be another example of an individual doing what they want without any consequences because of money. **Mannion**, referencing the May meeting minutes, stated that Saugatuck Meadows is not connected to Campit, however, Michael **O'Connor** owns their land. He questioned how they are going to be separate. **Smalley** responded that also in the minutes, it says that once the site plan is approved, **O'Connor** is going to sell the land to the new owners.

Stephanie **Hughes** noted her concerns about Campit expanding under a new name (Saugatuck Meadows). She also noted the importance of enforcement.

Delaney **Kronemeyer** - 6552 118th Ave wondered how the notarized statement from the new campground would be enforced. He is worried that the guests at the new campground will go to Campit, making the events even larger. Regarding the lakeshore incident that Badra discussed, **Kronemeyer** wondered why the township can't issue a stop work order.

XII. Adjournment

Badra made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Hutchins** seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:03PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katelynn Wolfe, Ganges Township Recording Secretary